

Episode One Hundred Thirty-Nine - The Letter to Menoeceus 06 - Pleasure Part Two

Post by "Don" of September 14, 2022 at 7:19 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Again, I think that "absence of pain" is something that is sensed but it doesn't arise from outside influences or causes. It is something felt "from inside." Felt. Sensed. Aponia "No pain" is a "state" or "condition" in which one feels untroubled in the body. Aponia and ataraxia are "things" felt in and of themselves, as much as joy (khara) and mirth/ good cheer (euphrosyne).

Revising and extending my remarks:

I implied in that quote that aponia = "absence of pain." I don't think that's right. Aponia and ataraxia are katastematic pleasures, just as khara and euphrosyne are kinetic pleasures. Hence, in my remarks above, they are all four sensed, perceived, etc.

The actual description of "absence of pain" is usually spelled out in full, and it's not always that phrase in the original:

Fragment 422. We need pleasure when in pain because of its absence; but when we are not experiencing such pain, and are perceiving stably, then there is no need for pleasure. For it is not the needs of nature which, from outside us, create harm, but desire driven by groundless opinions.

Fragment 423. What brings unsurpassed joy is the removal of a great evil (μέγα κακόν mega kakon "great evil; ie, pain"); and this is the nature of the good, if you apply your mind rightly and then stand firm and do not stroll about chattering emptyly.

Fragment 445. We must not blame the body for the greatest evils nor attribute our troubles to mere circumstance. Instead we seek their cause within the soul (psykhē "mind, soul, psyche"): for by giving up every trifling and fleeting desire we give birth to a confidence perfect in itself.

I think I've looked at "every trifling and fleeting desire" recently in another thread, but the importance here is that "we seek their cause within the mind/soul." That fragment to me seems to say that the greatest pains/evils are generated from within the mind, and, to me, that implies that we also have access to the greatest pleasures from within our minds (as Metrodorus and Epicurus say in their texts).

I think the sensation /recognition and enjoyment of the "absence of pain" is itself ataraxia and aponia. The sensation of being in the condition or state of absence of pain in the body and

freedom from disturbance in the mind is aponia and ataraxia. Just as engagement in a physical activity brings joy (khara) and mirth (euphrosyne).